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# Dan Smoot Report

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DAN SMOOT

## REPUBLICAN RESURGENCE

Unity was the theme of the 1968 Republican National Convention at Miami. From Tony Bennett's singing "That's the Story of Love" on Monday morning, August 5, to the jazzy rendition of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" following adjournment at 11:42 Thursday night, August 8, the convention was a political love-in — almost.

Senator Mark Hatfield (liberal Birch-hater who preached hatred of all haters in 1964) preached harmony in 1968, saying "diversity represents disloyalty" and that it "will not happen this year."

William Miller — Goldwater's running mate in 1964, but a supporter of Rockefeller in 1968 — said Republicans could not afford the "luxury of disunity," because they are a minority party.

Interviewed on the floor about his attitude toward the prevailing emphasis on unity, Senator Jacob Javits (one of the liberals who refused to support Goldwater in 1964) was asked whether he would support the Republican nominee this year if the nominee happened to be Ronald Reagan. Javits didn't say *yes* and didn't say *no*. He said it was *unthinkable* that the convention would nominate Reagan.

Stalking the convention like the ghost of Banquo was a man who wasn't there — George Wallace. From the Governor of Florida to the Governor of California, Republican dignitaries warned delegates and voters to beware of Wallace. Obviously aware that Wallace's greatest popular appeal derives from his stand on law and order, the Republicans came down hard on that issue. The only sentence in their platform which they emphasized with italics and ended with an exclamation point, says: "*We will not tolerate violence!*"

From Barry Goldwater to John Lindsay, dignitaries at the convention deplored, scorned, rebuked, rejected, and reviled "racism." If "racism" means *painful awareness of race*, or *fomenting bitterness between Negroes and whites*, or *churning up racial issues for self-serving reasons*, or *kowtowing to one particular racial group for political reasons*, then Republicans should have castigated Democrats and

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Republicans for racism — in that order. Surely the four most blatantly "racist" groups in the United States are (1) communists, (2) Negro militants, (3) Democrat politicians, (4) Republican politicians.

Barry Goldwater spoke to the 1968 Republican convention the first day. Though his speech was not really conservative, Goldwater was there as a symbol of conservatism. The convention received him as such, and gave him the warmest, most spontaneous demonstration given during the first day, if not during the entire convention.

Goldwater's reception indicated that, "in their hearts" (to use a phrase from the 1964 Goldwater slogan), a majority of Republican delegates in 1968 were at least inclined *toward* conservatism. The general attitude toward Governor Ronald Reagan was additional indication that a majority of the 1968 convention delegates, in their hearts, were inclined toward conservatism.

Reagan became a hero to conservatives when he made his splendid television speech for Goldwater in 1964. His favoritism toward Rockefeller liberals in his administration since he became Governor of California has tarnished his image among conservatives; but he still remains the most articulate and personable Republican Party leader in the nation.

I thought Reagan was clearly the most popular candidate at the 1968 convention; yet, he never had a chance to win. One reason was his own strategy: his status as a non-candidate candidate made him look ludicrous, especially at the last moment. Having denied his candidacy for more than a year (resisting the desire of millions who wanted him as a candidate), he became a candidate on the opening day of the convention because the California delegation "resolved" him into it. But by then, it was too late. Nixon, who had been openly campaigning for a long time, already had the "open convention" closed.

Another reason for Reagan's failure was the fear of a liberal revolt if he were nominated. Though he was the favorite of conservatives, conservatives made only a feeble fight for him. Having lost with their own candidate in 1964, and having been persuaded that they lost because of the liberal revolt, conservatives accepted the "practical" approach in 1968, apparently believing that by behaving and supporting a nominee acceptable to liberals, they would pick up more crumbs than by fighting for men and ideas they believed in.

The consuming passion of the Republican convention was the desire to get a *Republican* into the White House, regardless of what he stands for. The convention was obsessed with winning. One comment, heard so often it became a refrain during those four days in August, was that *this year* Republicans were being *pragmatic*, avoiding *ideology*. That is, the end justifies the means; whatever is necessary to win must be done, without regard for fundamental principles or (as James Madison phrased it) for the "character of government."

Nixon supporters used the hope of patronage as a powerful persuader: since Nixon is going to win the nomination anyway, be practical and support him enthusiastically; if he wins the election, you will have a chance to be a White House insider, in a position to influence appointments for yourself and friends, and to get other presidential favors.

Although both factions vowed dedication to unity, only conservatives honored the pledge. Conservatives were remarkably tolerant of Rockefeller's arrogant efforts to overpower the convention with bands and hired demonstrators who were illegally admitted to the hall. There was only a polite raising of conservative eyebrows when a sextet of Rockefeller boosters brazenly crashed a reception given by the National Federation of Republican Women, blasting the gathering with Rockefeller campaign songs.

Republican liberals were less docile. In accepting Richard Nixon, they made no great concession, since they well remembered his long political rec-



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ord. The liberals made no serious concessions in accepting the 1968 Republican platform, because —with a few minor exceptions—it is a socialistic, internationalist platform which could accommodate Hubert Humphrey as well as Richard Nixon.

But when something they disliked happened — *i.e.*, Nixon's astutely planned rejection of a known liberal running mate in favor of Spiro T. Agnew — Republican liberals almost spoiled the love-in. Open revolt would have erupted, despite the cost to their unity image, if liberals had not been caught off guard, had not waited too long to gather their forces, and had not used as their stalking horse hapless George Romney, a self-characterized "dead duck."

The illusion that liberals made a significant concession in accepting Agnew has little reality. Agnew first came to national attention as an ardent Rockefeller Republican. Miffed over Rockefeller's early refusal to carry the party's liberal banner in 1968, Agnew (after much "soul searching") switched his support to the obvious winner. Apart from making some sensible remarks about enforcing law in Maryland, Agnew has never, to my knowledge, taken a stand on issues contrary to the liberal Rockefeller position.

As I see it, liberalism (which means socialism) triumphed at the 1968 Republican convention. Before conservatives rejoice over a few concessions which *seem* to have been made to them in the platform, they ought to reflect a bit. For example, the Republican platform expresses support for the Connally Reservation (which keeps the World Court from intervening at will in U. S. domestic affairs); but Richard Nixon has supported efforts to *abolish* the Connally Reservation.[1] The Republican platform promises that nations hostile to the U. S. will receive no aid from us; but when Nixon was Vice President, he *supported* aid to nations hostile to our country.

Apart from a few such pledges as these, I can find nothing in Republican foreign policy proposals that would change the abortive foreign policy we have had under three Democrat administrations and one Republican administration since the end of World War II. Note this passage from the 1968 Republican platform:

**"Our best hope for enduring peace lies in comprehensive international cooperation. We will consult with nations that share our purposes. We will press for their greater participation in man's common concerns and encourage regional approaches to defense, economic development, and peaceful adjustments of disputes.**

**"We will seek to develop law among nations and strengthen agencies to effectuate that law and cooperatively solve common problems. We will assist the United Nations to become the keystone of such agencies. . . ."**

The UN as the "keystone" of world peace, and regional agencies (such as NATO and SEATO) under the UN umbrella as "keystones" of regional defense and economic development — all of this has been the "keystone" of the foreign policy positions of both Democrat and Republican parties for a quarter of a century. It has dragged America to the very precipice of disaster. It has caused the confiscation of hundred of billions of dollars from American taxpayers for gifts and loans to foreign nations — many of which are communist, most of which are socialist, virtually all of which are now anti-American.

The foreign policy which was created by Democrats and endorsed by Republicans has put us in the position of financing both sides of armaments races between hostile nations throughout the world, with the result that we have bought the enmity of all. It has helped to weaken America's position in world trade and to erode the value of the American dollar until our nation is now facing the worst financial crisis in our history. This foreign policy has involved us in two bloody, undeclared wars in the past 18 years — keeping hundreds of thousands of our fighting men actually engaged in combat during most of that time. Yet the Republicans offer us more of the same as the realistic road to peace.

As to domestic policy: I can find nothing in the 1968 Republican Party platform that offers significant change from the modern-Republican, new-frontier, great-society domestic policies of the



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Eisenhower-Nixon, Kennedy-Johnson, and Johnson-Humphrey administrations.

In writing his 1968 acceptance speech, Richard M. Nixon obviously borrowed from many sources. He repeated a remark made by Adlai Stevenson when accepting *his* second presidential nomination: "This time will be different. This time we're going to win!"

For dramatic effect, he borrowed the rhetorical style of the late Martin Luther King. Nixon's "I see a day" refrain was hauntingly similar to King's "I have a dream" speech of 1963.

Nixon's speech was appealing, well prepared, well received. It accurately reflected the tenor of the Republican platform:

— Both Nixon's speech and the platform deplored the consequences of Johnson-Humphrey policies, dishonestly absolving Republicans of all responsibility for those policies and their consequences, never hinting that the policies were mere extensions of Eisenhower-Nixon policies.

— Both paid lip service to freedom, free enterprise, and individualism, while recommending continuation of government policies which are strangling the liberty of individuals to engage in enterprise, free of crushing taxation, bureaucratic regulations, and government competition.

—Both made a ringing declaration of support for law and order, while setting an example of lawlessness by endorsing federal programs that violate the supreme law of our land, the Constitution.

— Both promised to eliminate the evils they condemned, by continuing the policies that caused the evils. They vowed to revamp old programs that have failed, by renaming them and revising the means by which tax money is poured into them. For example, Johnson-Humphrey's Manpower Training and Development Program will become the Human Investment Program. Grants of tax money to businesses providing job training, will be changed (in the Nixon-Agnew administration) to tax credits for businesses engaged in the same programs.

In short, Republicans in convention in 1968 rather well did what they set out to do: they acted pragmatically and avoided ideology. While criticizing Democrat programs and promising change, they offered the nation nothing new except something the platform called "Republican resurgence" and Republican leadership which, the platform vowed, will "think anew and act anew."

Once again, a major political party promised to do everything for the people except to leave them alone.

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### FOOTNOTES

(1) Article by Russel Porter, *The New York Times*, Jan. 31, 1960, pp. 1, 33


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